

## FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER: A SAFETY NET IN TIMES OF TROUBLE



Roneasha Bell, left, talks with Joanne Williams-Swiney, director of the New Community Family Resource Success Center, about her family's plight.

Until recently, Roneasha Bell and her three children called a hotel room home. Their homelessness resulted after she was laid off from her job at a Newark charter school, rendering her unable to pay the \$1,100 rent on the family's three bedroom apartment.

"Not having a kitchen was the hardest part. I would use the microwave to cook. To keep things cold, I would put things out on the window ledge," explained Bell, 40, who holds a bachelor's degree in theater from Long Island University.

One day while shopping at the Pathmark Shopping Center in Newark, Bell noticed the signs on the window of New Community's Family Resource Success Center. It is a one-stop center that serves as a centralized information and referral source for all services offered under the New Community umbrella, as well as many other resources in the larger community. She decided to go inside.

On the intake form everyone is required to complete, Bell indicated she was in need of temporary shelter, rental assistance, furniture and relocation ser-

vices. Everyone she met at the center was helpful and friendly and seemed really interested in helping her.

"Ms. Swiney (Joanne Williams-Swiney, the director) made a couple of phone calls and then told me I needed to go to Harmony House right away," recalled Bell, who was provided with a referral slip for the Newark-based facility, which is New Community's transitional living facility for homeless families. "I was shocked. I thought it would be more difficult, but everything just fell into place," she added.

Once at Harmony House, the staff completed an intake on Bell and she was told she could move in the following day. Through a connection New Community has with a rental assistance program, Bell was also approved to receive a security deposit and the first month's rent on a permanent apartment. Relocation specialists at Harmony House assisted Bell, who is receiving unemployment, in finding an apartment she could afford. Bell was scheduled to move into the three bedroom apartment in Newark's Vailsburg section in early April.

## Authenticity

*"The authentic self is the soul made visible."*

**Sarah Ban Breathnach**

*"This above all; to thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, though canst not then be false to any man."*

**William Shakespeare**

*"Always be a first-rate version of yourself instead of a second-rate version of someone else."*

**Judy Garland**

*"Authentic empowerment is the knowing that you are on purpose, doing God's work, peacefully and harmoniously."*

**Wayne Dyer**

*"Following all the rules leaves a completed checklist. Following your heart achieves a completed you."*

**Ray Davis**

For Information on Social Investment, please contact:

Rev. Msgr. William J. Linder

Tel: 973-497-4415

Fax 973-482-2137

233 West Market Street,  
Newark, NJ 07103

[linder@newcommunity.org](mailto:linder@newcommunity.org),  
[www.newcommunity.org](http://www.newcommunity.org)



## Family Resource Center....cont'd



Williams-Swiney, the resource center director, said serving as a safety net for struggling families is part of the service she and her workers provide on a daily basis. "It is so fulfilling to know that we are helping," she said.

"If it wasn't for New Community, we would still be living in a hotel. I cannot believe how fast and efficient they were in helping me and my family," said Bell.

From left to right, Zenya Bell, 11, Akilah Bell, 6, Roneasha Bell, mother, and Kolanji Bell, 8. The family was living in a hotel before New Community Family Resource Center assisted in getting them placed at New Community's transitional living facility, Harmony House, pictured here. The family was scheduled to move into their own permanent apartment in early April with rental assistance they received with the help of New Community.

## NEW COMMUNITY GALA CELEBRATES 45 YEARS OF SERVICE TO INNER CITY RESIDENTS

New Community Corporation's 45 years of providing services and programs to inner city residents was celebrated on March 9, 2013 during a gala attended by more than 500 people at the Sheraton Meadowlands in East Rutherford.

Using the 45th anniversary theme, "Out of the Ashes Came Hope," the gala featured musical entertainment by the Kit McClure Band and a tribute to NCC Founder Monsignor William J. Linder's '50 People I Admire.' Former New Jersey Gov. Jim Florio and his wife, Lucinda, were among the 50 in attendance, with the governor speaking extremely complimentary about New Community and its comprehensive approach to improving the lives of inner city residents.

"New Community is a real example of an institution that has touched the lives of tens of thousands of people. It touches every facet of community life," Florio said.

Monsignor also spoke personally about two women who were among his '50 People I Admire,' Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, whose life influenced him to enter the priesthood, and Edith Stein, also known as Saint Edith Stein, a German Roman Catholic philosopher and nun born into an observant Jewish family.

"I never met her, but that woman had a great influence on my life," Monsignor told those gathered for the gala, speaking of Dorothy Day.

A book due out this spring entitled, "Out of the Ashes Came Hope," will focus on the life of Monsignor Linder and the founding of New Community Corporation after the Summer Disorders of 1967. New Community was formally incorporated as an organization just months later, in January 1968.



Monsignor William J. Linder, right, with Bob Curvin, a founding board member of New Community, at the 45th Anniversary Gala

Arthur Wilson, who as board president for nearly 40 years helped guide New Community as it grew, was presented with an award of appreciation, as he recently retired from his board position.

Some of the stories of individuals whose lives have been transformed by New Community were also highlighted in a video presentation during the gala. One of the testimonies was that of Angel Lopez, who explained how he was involved in a life of drugs before he enrolled in New Community's Automotive Technician Program, which is a partnership with Ford Motor Company. Today, Lopez describes himself as one of the "top techs" at Jersey City Ford, where he was hired after graduating from the New Community program last year.

A senior featured in the video, Darlene Parker, a longtime resident of New Community Douglas Homes, called NCC her "lifeline," crediting Monsignor for his vision in wanting to improve the lives of so many.



## Smooth Leadership Transition at New Community



The reins of New Community are being turned over to a seasoned organization insider, Richard Rohrman, as part of a smooth transition in leadership that will see founder and CEO Monsignor William J. Linder maintaining his involvement, but from his seat on the board.

Rohrman, who has been with New Community for close to 20 years, is assuming the title of Executive Director, effective April 1, 2013, and will be the key decision maker for the nation's largest and most comprehensive community development organization. Formerly, Rohrman had served as Director of Real Estate Development, Business Operations and Economic Development, guiding New Community as it expanded in the area of affordable housing and commercial development.

"The transition began months ago and I must say everything has gone quite smoothly," said Monsignor. "Now, Rich will start shaping the 'new' New Community."

One of Monsignor's most trusted confidants, Rohrman said he is pleased to lead New Community into the future.

"We're going to be very focused on our future and how we get there. We will see expansion and will move into new areas. NCC will not be in 'reactive' mode," he promised.

He has already started meeting with staff from various New Community departments and is aggressively taking steps to ensure the organization, founded in 1968, will be around for another 45 years.

"Rich has wasted no time and has hit the ground running," said Frances Teabout, Director of Mission for New Community. "He is focused and reaching out to all

levels of employees from different departments because he wants to promote a team effort in moving New Community forward."

Rohrman holds a BS in Business Administration from Christian Brothers University in Memphis, TN.

## Saint Vincent Academy Students Help Usher in Spring at Harmony House



Students from Saint Vincent Academy in Newark bringing a flair of spring to a bulletin board at New Community's Harmony House, from left, are Imani Baldwin, sitting; Jessica Fagbola, Julie Attys and Sideah Green.

Students from Saint Vincent Academy in Newark recently visited New Community's Harmony House transitional living facility, where they painted springtime murals on windows, spruced up bulletin boards and helped with office work as part of an annual community service project.

"It's really fun. We are doing hands-on work and it gives us a chance to be creative, so I like that," said Sideah Green, a junior at the all-girls, private, college prep, Catholic high school in Newark. "We're not just a school, we're a community."

The week-long service project was part of an annual program at the school known as Students-in-Community. Started in the early 1970s, the program is a requirement for every girl attending Saint Vincent Academy and is designed to help shape spirituality and an appreciation of the importance of individual commitment to community. The volunteer outreach also introduces the students to a range of career options in the service professions.



## TAWANNA BROWN



When parents send their children to school, they are entrusting both the teachers and administration with the individuals most precious to them. At Community Hills Early Learning Center, Director Tawanna Brown couldn't be more cognizant of the responsibility that comes with molding young minds and teaching them skills and character-building that will remain with them for life.

"She's for the children. She has so much patience and is just awesome," said parent, Zenobia Sanders, whose 5-year-old daughter, Zoe Brown, has been attending Community Hills since she was two.

At Community Hills, Brown oversees a center with 152 students—47 infants/toddlers and 105 preschoolers. She also has jurisdiction over New Community's second early childhood center—Harmony House Early Learning Center, where there are 60 students—45 infants/ toddlers and 15

preschoolers.

"The most fulfilling part of my job is having the opportunity from day to day to provide a creative, yet challenging learning environment for hundreds of children," Brown said. "I also like being able to introduce progressive educators to our NCC family and the families in our community."

A native of Newark, Brown said the importance of education was instilled in her as a young child. She attended Queen of Angels elementary school and Essex Catholic High School for girls.

"It was in high school through participating in leadership programs that I saw a difference in educational opportunities, so I was determined then to advocate in my community for quality education for all children," she said.

Brown earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Adelphi University

in Long Island and later attended Mercy College, in Dobbs Ferry, NY, where she earned an M.S. in School Building Leadership, graduating with distinction.

She was originally hired by New Community in 1994 as a Senior Site Director at Babyland Family Services, which was then part of the New Community network. Brown held the position until 2000, when she left to take a position at Susan Wagner Day School, a non-profit located in the Bronx, New York.

She then returned to New Community in 2005, when she was hired as the Program Director for Community Hills Early Learning Center.

According to Brown, more emphasis than ever is being placed by city and state officials on serving infants and toddlers as part of early childhood education. She said teachers from Community Hills attend weekly and monthly workshops to keep up with the latest trends.

"We are dealing with everything from immunizations to families that have been displaced and those lacking health insurance," she said.

Because parental involvement is a strong indicator of a child's success in school, Brown stressed how looking at the entire family unit is important in early childhood education.

"You have to see the whole picture and we want to know how we can help families," she said.

Brown resides in the Bronx, NY with her husband, Derrick Brown, and son, Derrick Brown Jr., 7.

### OUR MISSION

To help residents of inner cities improve the quality of their lives to reflect individual, God-given dignity and personal achievement.